Final Project Structure

Your proposal should include the following sections:

I. Introduction (1–2 pages) - Identification of a research problem in criminal justice.
   1. This would be an edited version of the introduction from the midterm project.

II. Literature Review (2–4 pages) - Background information including credible resources to help understand the problem, the research that has already been conducted in this area, and their general findings.
   1. The literature review may include extra articles (beyond the five included in the midterm project) and any additional edits or modifications to the work completed for the midterm project.

III. Methods (4–5 pages) – Outline how you would conduct your own study of a topic in criminal justice. This section should be detailed and provide enough information for another person to replicate your study based entirely on the information included in this section. A detailed methods section would include the following:
   1. Concepts under study (for example: peer associations and juvenile delinquency).
   2. Conceptual and operational definitions. For example: number of hours spent with pro-social peers each week; number of delinquent acts committed in the past year.
   3. Your specific research hypothesis (or hypotheses). For example: Spending more time with pro-social friends decreases juvenile delinquency.
   4. Discuss your sampling design or strategy. Specify your unit of analysis, how you will identify members of the population, and how you will select the sample.
   5. Identification of the general approach to the research. For instance, is your study quantitative or qualitative?
   6. Discuss the type of research design you would employ to accomplish this task. Is the study using pre-test/post-test design; randomized experiments; post-test only; etc.?
   7. Outline the methods you would use to collect the data. Here you would specify the techniques used to collect information such as interviews, surveys, secondary data, observation, etc. You would also discuss any instruments needed to collect the information like surveys or interview schedules.
      a. If you are interested in using some type of survey, visit: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/nhis_questionnaires.htm. This resource has hundreds of instruments already developed that can be used for the research proposal.
b. If you are proposing an original survey be used in the study, you would be expected to develop the instrument for the proposal and include the survey in the appendix section.

8. Procedures that would be used in the research.
9. Analysis or statistical testing.
10. Any limitations in terms of the method(s) selected, sampling design, instruments, etc.
11. A discussion of the internal and external validity of the proposed study.

IV. Conclusion (1 page) – Provide a summary of the problem, the research questions, hypothesis and research plan. Be sure to articulate why the problem is important to study, and what will be accomplished with the research.

V. Appendices – If you have developed an original survey for the study it would be included in this section. The remaining items are just suggestions, and are not required for the proposal.

1. Any original surveys developed for the study – required.
2. Instruments (that are not copyrighted) to be used in the study – optional.
3. Instructions to subjects – optional.